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# **EPA News Release**

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A proposed \$14 million cleanup plan for the Colbert Landfill in northern Spokane County was announced today by Christine Gregoire, director of the Washington Department of Ecology, and Robie G. Russell, Northwest regional administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The cleanup plan, contained in consent decree that will be lodged today in U.S. District Court in Spokane, involves Ecology, EPA, Spokane County and Key Tronic Corporation. Fairchild Air Force Base, which like Spokane County and Key Tronic contributed to contamination of the landfill, agreed to settle its liability through separate agreements with Ecology and EPA.

"The proposed cleanup shows that federal, state and local governments can work together with private parties to deal with pollution problems," said Gregoire. "This particular partnership will ensure that contaminated groundwater around the Colbert Landfill will be cleaned up to levels that meet or exceed drinking water standards."

EPA's Russell said that the agreement calls for Spokane County, working under Ecology and EPA supervision, to pump contaminated groundwater from the area around the landfill into a treatment unit that will remove the industrial solvents that leached from the landfill into the drinking water wells of neighboring property owners.

"Once the pumping starts, the migration of the contaminants will be brought to a halt," Russell declared. "Instead of continuing to spread out, the contaminants will be contained."

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Russell said the contaminants consist of a half dozen chlorinated organic solvents, principally trichloroethane, that are commonly used as cleansing agents in a wide variety of industrial applications. In the pump-and-treat system in the Colbert clean-up, said Russell, the solvents will either completely removed or reduced to such levels that the treated groundwater can be discharged harmlessly the Little Spokane River.

According to Gregoire, homeowners with contaminated drinking water wells will be offered hookups to clean water. Some households have already received such hookups.

Gregoire said funding for the cleanup will be provided as follows:

Spokane County.....	\$6.30 million
Key Tronic.....	\$4.20 million
Fairchild Air Force Base.....	\$1.45 million
EPA.....	\$1.40 million
Ecology.....	\$0.76 million

Gregoire said Spokane County is eligible for Ecology grant money which could reduce the county's share of the cost by as much 30 percent.

Russell and Gregoire said their two agencies will insist that the design for the cleanup include a groundwater monitoring program that will continue well into the 21st Century to make sure that the cleanup actually achieves what it is intended to do. Work has already begun on the design of the cleanup, even though those efforts are not required until the consent decree is officially entered as an enforceable document in U.S District Court. The decree can be entered only after it has undergone a 30-day public comment period. The comment period is expected to start within a few days.

A public meeting has been scheduled by EPA and Ecology to explain the decree and the technical workplan that provides details of the agreement between the signatories. The meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, February 2, at the Colbert Elementary School (East 4525 Green Bluff Road in Colbert).

Copies of the consent decree and workplan are available for review at the Colbert Elementary School, the North Spokane Library (East 44 Hawthorne) and the Department of Ecology's Spokane office (Suite 109, North 4601 Monroe).

Written comments on the decree should be sent to Jim Nichol, Land and Natural Resources Division, U.S. Department of Justice, 10th Street and Constitution Avenue, Washington, D.C., 20530.

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